



Protecting Human
Life
Children & Families
Health & Human
Services
Justice for
Immigrants
Protecting the
Poor & Vulnerable
Criminal Justice

Save the Date:

Texas Catholic

Advocacy Day

March 26th, 2019

8AM-4PM

Austin, TX

Texas State Capitol

Join the Texas bishops and thousands of Catholics in a day at our State Capitol, visiting legislators, and promoting faithful citizenship. This bi-annual rally is hosted by the Texas bishops to promote the Church's values of Life, Justice, Charity, and Religious Freedom to members of the Texas Legislature.



Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops

THE PUBLIC POLICY VOICE OF THE CHURCH



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2019 Legislative Agenda: 86th Session



Life and Family Life: Human life is intrinsically valuable and should be protected by law from fertilization to natural death. Moreover, the family is the sanctuary of life in which parents teach children how they ought to live. Therefore, the TCCB opposes direct threats to innocent human life, from fertilization to natural death, and seeks to promote strong, stable, and healthy families. Specifically, the TCCB:

- opposes abortion and euthanasia;
- supports the elimination of all funding for abortion providers;
- supports increased funding to abortion alternatives for expectant mothers;
- supports the elimination of wrongful birth lawsuits;
- supports proposals that recognize the sacredness, fidelity, and permanency of marriage;
- supports an improved foster care system which respects subsidiarity through a community-based model; and
- supports increased recruitment, formation, and support of foster, adoptive, and biological parents.



Immigration: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in America are preserved by a government that is of, by, and for the people. This is the exceptional American heritage, and it has been charitably offered to the world's oppressed and persecuted for over two centuries. The TCCB encourages its continuation, welcomes migrants embracing the American dream, and respects the enforcement of laws which preserve the common good. Specifically, the TCCB:

- opposes efforts to reduce access by immigrants to IDs, birth certificates, drivers' licenses, education, and healthcare;
- supports care for unaccompanied minors and alternatives to family detention;
- supports enforcement measures which are targeted, proportional, and humane; and
- supports the reunification of immigrant families.



Restorative Justice: In response to crime, the state has primary responsibility to uphold justice, with the goals of achieving restitution, protecting the common good, deterring offenses, and rehabilitating offenders. However, our state struggles with overincarceration and overcriminalization, which have arisen from the hardness that so often accompanies all earthly justice. Therefore, the TCCB seeks mercy in order to help the state achieve the goals listed above. Specifically, the TCCB:

- opposes the imposition and use of the death penalty;
- supports bail reforms which depend upon the accused's danger, not their wealth;
- supports the rehabilitation of offenders who commit non-violent state jail felonies;
- supports raising the age of criminal responsibility for 17-year-olds;
- supports parole board review of lengthy sentences given to juveniles; and
- supports efforts to recategorize rent-to-own defaults as a civil offense.



Education: The family is the sanctuary of life, in which parents teach children how they ought to live. Thus, the education of children is a primary right and serious duty of parents, and the state participates in education with the parents' consent. Moreover, the central focus of public financing for education should always be the good of children. Therefore, the TCCB supports expanded educational opportunities for Texas parents and students. Specifically, the TCCB:

- supports parental choice in education, including tax credit scholarships;
- supports creating a do-not-hire registry of persons barred from school employment due to inappropriate or unlawful relationships with students or minors;
- supports student-based school funding, and encourages the improvement of funding methods which are not responsive to student demographics;
- supports the autonomy of private institutions;

- supports increased funding for tuition equalization grants; and
- supports access to Pre-Kindergarten, and before- or after-school child care.



Healthcare: While modern science has given rise to nearly miraculous cures for human illnesses, it may also be used to destroy life.

Thus, modern medicine should continually orient its work toward the dignity and transcendence of every human. To foster this, the TCCB promotes health and healthcare access in accord with the principles of bioethics. Specifically, the TCCB:

- supports healthcare which respects patient dignity and physician conscience;
- supports access to palliative care and monitors changes to the advance directive act;
- supports increased access to health insurance and healthcare, such as through Medicaid and CHIP;
- supports studies of maternal mortality and morbidity, and efforts to improve the health of Texas mothers;
- supports preventative care and enhanced health education to help patients play a greater role in their health; and
- supports increased access to treatment for addiction.



Social Concerns: Texans have inherited remarkable economic opportunity, and employment arising from such opportunity has a special dignity. We are grateful for these gifts. However, shrewdness in acquiring wealth can be so highly praised that we forget the poor and vulnerable, who are our neighbors, and cannot be neglected in the work for the common good. Therefore, the TCCB seeks to assist those who are in the greatest need. Specifically, the TCCB:

- supports initiatives that reduce marriage penalties in public assistance programs;
- opposes usurious loans, especially payday and auto-title lending;
- supports anti-poverty public assistance which incentivizes self-sufficiency;
- supports efforts to alleviate food insecurity and hunger, including through summer nutrition programs, school meals, and nutritional education;
- supports efforts to assist in the care and support of persons with disabilities; and

- supports efforts to combat human trafficking, care for victims, and reunify families.



Religious Liberty: The Church feeds the hungry; accompanies the lonely; comforts the sick, dying, and grieving; helps the addicted; gives aid to widows and orphans; shelters refugees; strengthens the fellowship between neighbors, citizens, and spouses; softens earthly justice with divine mercy; and inculcates the morality that a free nation needs to function. Yet today, religious liberty is under attack by the state. Such liberty is not only about our ability to worship by going to Mass on Sunday or praying the Rosary at home. Rather, it is about whether Christians can make our contribution to the common good of all Americans. Therefore, the TCCB seeks to maintain and protect religious liberty. Specifically, the TCCB:

- supports efforts to protect religious liberty, especially as it pertains to human life, marriage, and the family;
- supports conscience protection for individuals and organizations contracting with governments, especially healthcare providers, educators, and those who serve the poor and vulnerable; and
- supports incentives for charitable giving by taxpayers to programs maintained by faith-based nonprofit entities.



Creation: We should see nature with awe and wonder, but too often we tend to merely view ourselves as nature's masters, who rightly employ it to satisfy our ever-multiplying desires. We thereby forget, or never learn, how to live wisely, think deeply, or love generously, and these are the requisite virtues to ensuring that the earth remains fruitful for our posterity. Therefore, the TCCB hopes to foster the prudent stewardship of creation. Specifically, the TCCB:

- supports an increased understanding of Texas' water availability;
- supports efficiency and conservation in water use to maintain availability for irrigation and drinking;
- supports efficiency and conservation in energy use and efforts to mitigate pollution; and
- supports efficiency in disaster recovery coordination among non-profits.

The TCCB is a federation of all Roman Catholic dioceses and ordinariates in Texas. There are 8 million Catholics living in our state. To contact us, call our office at 512-339-9882, email jennifer@txcatholic.org, or find TXCatholic on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).